1: Huntingford E-4, 5 (1938-1939) 1953 FL6 Dorobo FL6

AGRICULTURE

The Dorobo began to cultivate in a small way about 30 years ago (or even a little earlier) and at first they grew only eleusine. Though their inclinations were to become cattle-owners, conditions were unfavourable to the development of cattle-breeding as a primary activity and they have been forced to make agriculture a serious business; for the methods, implements, and even the seed used in this, they have been indebted to the Nandi.

Land

Those who live in A and B domicile categories (with whom alone we are concerned here) cultivate small plots in the open land which surrounds the forest. They have no rights of tenure, except the temporary ones acquired, according to Kenya law, if they live there as squatters under the Resident Native Labourers Ordinance. Their plots, *imbaret*, pl. *imbaremik*, range in size from one acre divided into four individual holdings, to half an acre divided into four holdings; in other cases, plots of a quarter to one-fifth of an acre worked by one person. All plots are fenced, and sometimes a living-hut is built inside the fenced area; occasionally it was found that elderly Dorobo were allowed by Nandi squatters to have a little piece of their cultivated land to work.

European farmers in the district, with whom the Dorobo land question was discussed, seemed not unwilling to let the Dorobo live unmolested on their land provided they gave no trouble; but the government authorities thought otherwise, and the position of a Dorobo who did not choose to become a squatter in order to live on what he considered his own land was thus precarious.

Cultivation Methods and Crops

Two main crops are grown, eleusine, *paiek*, and maize, *ipandek*. Millet had not been grown by 1940, though they bought it from the Nandi. Sweet potatoes, *ropoonik*, are sometimes grown in very limited quantities. Implements are the heart-shaped hoe and the panga or cutlass, both obtained from the Nandi. They have also small axes, *ndolut*, and knives, *rotuet* or *cambolust*.

The growing of crops is regulated by the dry and wet seasons, *muainonik*, from October to March, and *iuotet*, from April to September. The land is prepared between January and April, and planted in April or May according to the rain. Cultivation follows the Nandi method, with paring and burning of new land. The seed of eleusine and maize is bought from the Nandi, usually from squatters living nearby. Maize and eleusine are planted together in the same plot, though potatoes are generally grown separately. Eleusine is reaped in the Nandi manner by cutting off the heads; maize is picked by hand. Granaries of Nandi type are sometimes made, but are seldom needed, as the yields are so small that the loft of a hut can generally hold all that is not eaten on the field (as is often the case with maize). Cereals are roughly ground on slabs of granite in the Nandi manner.

Food

Food in the old days consisted mainly of meat supplemented by honey, wild vegetables, and grain bought by exchange from the Nandi. The food supply is now based on their own agricultural produce, supplemented by milk when they have any, and by certain other foods when they can be got. Meat is still obtained by trapping, though seldom by hunting; it includes the flesh of antelopes, monkeys, pigs, and leopards. Honey is got, as already described, from honey-barrels. Wild food, collected in the forest, includes fruit of the *momoniat* (*rubus rigidus*), *lemeiyuet* (*xymonia americana*), and *sasuriet* (*musa ensete*, wild banana), the sap of the *sasuria* and leaves of nettle, *siuot*.

Intoxicating drink is of two kinds: the Dorobo honey-wine, *hiphetinik* or *kumik ap lo*, made from honey, and fermented with the long seed-pods of the "sausage

3:Huntingford E-5 (1921-1928)1929 FL6 Dorobo FL6

II.—Mode of Subsistence.

Houses.

342 [361] The Dorôbo live in little shelters or huts (*kochonget*, pl. *kochongwiek*; N. *kwiet*) built in small clearings in the forest; they are made of a framework of sticks stuck in the ground, and bent over, forming a domed roof; the whole is covered on the outside with leaves of trees and banana leaves, which are insufficient, in spite of the addition of an ox-hide on the top, to keep the hut dry inside when it rains. The upright sticks are strengthened by others tied across them with tree-rope. The huts are oblong, with rounded ends, and are of the following average dimensions:—Height, 5 ft. 10 ins.; width, 7 ft. 6 ins.; length, 11 ft. They are occupied for two or three months, after which they become ruinous and "full of fleas," when the [590] family moves to a fresh site. Two to four people live in one hut. One group of huts we saw contained two huts, and had contained a third which had been pulled down. The huts are divided into two parts, the sleeping-place (*itôkto*, N.) and the [353] fire-place, which are separated by two or three poles laid across the floor of the hut, on one side of which are laid ox-hides (*muûsik*; N. *muiuak*), upon which the occupants [513] eat and sleep; at night they cover themselves with skins. In the other half of the hut is the door (*kurkut*, N.), about 2 ft. high. Some huts have two doors, opposite [354] each other. Between the door and the sleeping-place is the hearth (*mêit*, N.), consisting of two or three smallish stones set on the floor. A loft (*saiuet*, N.) is sometimes made in this part of the hut, extending across the width, and ending at the beginning of the sleeping-place. The loft is about 2 ft. 6 ins. above the floor, and [251] is made of thin sticks supported on thicker cross-sticks, and tied together with [372] tree-rope. Upon it are kept firewood and eleusine grain (Text-figs. 26–28). The [412] only household utensils are a small broom (*sôtutiet*) about 14 ins. long, made of [415] a bush-buck's tail fastened to a thin wooden handle, for sweeping the floor; "water jars" (*soiyet*) made of a hollowed piece of bamboo about 2½ ins. wide and 2 ft. 8 ins. long; a grindstone (*litêto*, N.) made of granite, for sharpening knives, [439] and for grinding eleusine grain. Gourds and earthenware pots are obtained from the Nandi; the Dorôbo have no stools. Fire is produced by means of fire-sticks (*piinet*; N. *piônet*) (Text-figs. 11*a*, 11*b*). A thin stick of the choruet tree (N.),[1] about 15 ins. 372 long and ½ in. thick, is stood upright on a stick of cedar (*teet*)[2] about 26 ins. long and 1 in. wide. The thin stick is called piinet, the cedar stick tasamet. The piinet is held between the palms of the hands, and the hands are rapidly rubbed together, beginning at the top of the piinet and working downwards (Pl. XXVI, Fig. 2). This is repeated until fire is obtained; the piinet drills a hole in the tasamet, and the heated wood-dust thus produced falls on to a knife-blade which is placed underneath. When sufficient heat is obtained it is laid on a small bundle of tinder (*sasyat* (dry grass) or fibre of the porôwet[3] tree), and blown till the tinder kindles.

[1] *Ficus* sp. [2] *Juniperus procera*. [3] *Dombeya* sp.

3:Huntingford E-5 (1921-1928)1929 FL6 Dorobo FL6

prepare food and wait upon the men, themselves eating when the men have finished. At the present day the Dorôbo are taking to eating eleusine grain, which is crushed on grindstones (*liêto*, N.) and made into a sort of porridge; and milk, which they obtain from Nandi, if there are any near them. Beer is made from honey, and is called *kipkelînik* (N.). Tobacco (*tumatet*, N.; or *chepkochûtit*,[1] N.) is bought from the Nandi, and is taken by men, and occasionally by women. It is either chewed (*mit*, N.) or smoked in Kavirondo pipes (*terênik-ap-tumatet*, or *kweînik*, N.), which are also obtained from the Nandi. The men carry tobacco in cylindrical boxes called *kiprawait* (N. *kipnut*) (Text-fig. 22), made from sosoiyat (bamboo), with skin coverings for the ends, to which are attached thin leather thongs, by which the box is slung round the neck.[2]

Agriculture and Stock.

Formerly the Dorôbo possessed no stock, nor did they till the ground. During the last quarter of a century or so a few of those living on the edge of the forest have taken to cultivating small plantations (*imbaret*, N.), in which they grow eleusine grain (*olbaiek*†, or *poiek*; N. *pâk*) only. A few possess, at the present day, one or two cows; others have a few goats and sheep; no one has more than 5 to 10 head. The only animals they possess in numbers are dogs.

Dress and Ornaments.

(i) *Males.*—Boys wear skins of antelopes and monkeys (*akuriet*; N. *inguriet*). Warriors wear skin garments of duiker (*ngemuuyo*,[3] N.) called akuriet; they wear leg-bells attached to a leather band (*mpitiko*,[3] pl. *mpitikoîsiek*) on the ankles. Nowadays some wear pieces of cotton-cloth (*anget*, N.) dyed brown.[3] Old men wear bush-buck skins (*akuriet*) with the fur left on. Caps (*engeraitt*) are worn, of blue duiker skin with the fur left on, by old men, and of cotton-cloth by warriors. Belts (*entoreitt*) of leather are worn by old men, and of beads by boys and warriors. Necklaces of chains (*sirimdo*, N.) or iron-wire (*asingait*, N.) are worn; also various kinds of iron ear-rings (*olaimeriat*† and *kimeitaiit* (Text-figs. 13–17); N. *kimeiteitiot*) are worn by warriors and elders.

(ii) *Females.*—The dress of the women and girls is very similar to that of Nandi women. They wear skirts (*chepkaiyuit*; N. *chepkwait*) and upper garments (*koliket*, N.), both of tanned leather, with the fur removed, in the same manner as the Nandi women. Their ornaments consist of iron-wire armlets and leglets (*makirarênik* and *karik*, N.), and wire necklaces (*asingait*, pl. *asingaîsiek*, N.). Married women wear

[1] *Chepkochutit* means "snuff" in Nandi.

[2] These are similar to the Nandi tobacco-boxes, from which indeed they are probably borrowed.

[3] As do the Nandi, from whom doubtless the custom spread to the Dorôbo.

6:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1953 FL6 Dorobo FL6

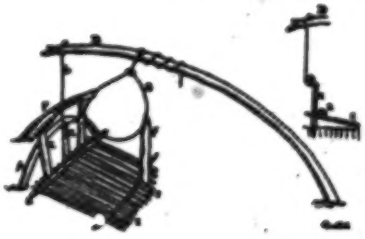

Fig. 5. A Simpler Kind of Springe. This trap has no "trigger-peg". The animal treads on the platform and by so doing presses it against the upright K to which liana *b* is attached, thus releasing the liana and allowing the bent stick D to spring upright and tighten the noose round the neck of the quarry.

when an animal treads on it, allowing the liana to slip over the top and thus release the bent stick D.

Hunting parties might be made up by as many as eight men, though I think that probably four or five was a more usual number. A common practice was for half the party to work along one bank of a stream and the rest along the other bank, so that if there was nothing on one side, those on the other side might be more successful; or if the quarry got across the stream, the men on the other side would be able to deal with it. When a kill was made, all the hunters assembled. The animal was skinned, the meat cut up, and some of it eaten on the spot, either raw, or partly cooked by laying it across a rough wooden framework over a fire. The rest of the meat was divided among them and taken home. In the best days, when meat was plentiful, what was left over was dried and kept either as a reserve or else exchanged with the Nandi for eleusine and millet. A stack of dried meat (*sirikeniot*) about 2 ft. square, was sold for about 25 lbs. of grain. Meat is cut into strips (*sir*, whence *sirikeniot*) which are laid out on the drying tray or loft over the fire to be smoke-cured after being dried on the roof of a hut or in the fork of a tree.

c) Agriculture

Since they can no longer hunt, and present conditions are[18] not favourable for the acquisition of cattle on a large scale (even if the Dorobo had the means of so doing), the adoption of agriculture has become an economic necessity, and methods, implements, and seed have been obtained from the Nandi. This change from hunting to agriculture has taken place virtually between the years 1927 and 1938. In the first of these years the area cultivated by them was so small as to be negligible; but by the latter year their lives were, as we have seen, to a great deal centered on agriculture. And as with hunting in the old days, so with agriculture to-day, the growing of crops is naturally regulated by the wet and dry seasons and the main divisions of the agricultural year are:

January to April: preparation of the land.
April-May: planting.
September: reaping.

[18] This refers to the years 1938-39.

6:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1953 FL6 Dorobo FL6

is to get as much as possible of the crop out of the way so that ploughing can start at once without having to wait till the crop is ripe. But the Dorobo had, all the same, made a step forward, for a solid, compact stook is less likely to be devastated by animals than plants standing scattered over a field.

By 25 November, 1938 the Kipukua people had reaped their crops. The shamba here was about an acre in extent, and was divided into four approximately equal-sized plots. There was little maize, for some had been eaten on the field and some had been destroyed by vermin; what was left had been stooked, and anything like an accurate estimate was impossible, though there might have been two or perhaps three bags in the stooks. If we estimate that the equivalent of two bags might have been eaten, and two more destroyed by vermin, we have about 6 or 7 bags, a somewhat high estimate for a crop grown mixed with eleusine, but not impossible[39]. Of eleusine, one plot yielded 3 bags, and another 2 bags (that is 5 bags from half an acre), not a great deal, certainly, but a fair yield under such conditions, and most useful as food, for the Dorobo eat most of their eleusine, and turn very little of it into beer. Maize and eleusine are ground by crushing on slabs of granite (*liteito*), and the resulting meal is made into gruel (*musarek*) for the children, and stiff porridge (*kimiet*) for the older people; it is generally eaten with a mess of vegetable food (*inguek*) prepared separately.

Storage of crops is not yet a very difficult problem. A few of the Dorobo, it is true, have built granaries of Nandi type, hidden just inside the forest to prevent thefts by the Nandi, for anyone can lift up the roof of such a granary in the night. But since so much of the maize is eaten on the field, what is left at harvest time can be stored in the loft; and the same applies to eleusine, for it does not yield a large amount of grain. I saw no millet growing, and the Dorobo said they bought it from the Nandi.

As we have already noted, agricultural labour is divided to a certain extent between the sexes, but the distinction is not very sharp, and it was found to work out in the following way:

Men:	Both:	Women:
Heavy preliminary work	Digging	
Planting	Weeding	Collecting and burning weeds
	Reaping	

The heavy work includes lopping off branches in the Nandi manner, clearing bushes, and breaking up the ground when hard. Women may also plant, but the tendency seems to be for men to do it, though there is no absolute rule against women planting. Children help with the weeding, and herd the goats when there are any; old men herd cattle, and women also sometimes herd goats.

The Dorobo had not by 1939 acquired the Nandi belief that each eleusine crop requires new land, which in the circumstances is just as well; but they do not hesitate to give up using land which is unproductive. Thus,

[39] The bag is the standard 2 ½ lb. gunny bag used in East Africa, holding 200 lbs. of maize.

[P. 194, A]

shares the *imbaret*, each house having its own strip, the whole being surrounded by a thorn fence which all help to make. Each is therefore a family or clan *imbaret*, and the group is an independent labour unit.

The grain crops are stored either in granaries of Nandi type, or else in the loft (*tapet*) of the hut; but as most of the crop is eaten before or soon after it is reaped, and as the yields are not large owing to the small areas planted, storage problems are not yet acute. Further supplies of food are got (1) by purchase or exchange; (2) by begging

241 423 [351] [614] 251 261 [437] [735]

/231 cont./

621 to dobonog, i.e., huts of the unmarried men, in contrast to the
[192] aija to daima, the camp of the married. Therefore here, too, we
[071] find, even in the name, a separation into kraal of the married and kraal of the warriors, similar to the one mentioned for the Masai.

171 The arrangement of the interior of the hut, like the form itself,
353 resembles that of the Masai; its furnishings, however, are even
415 sparser. A honey pot (madjé, madjeog), a gourd bottle (mget) for
237 drinking water and honey beer, a leather bag (lebenu, lebenua)
283 for collecting honey, a larger one (ndaro, ndareraũg) for water, a
352 few earthen pots, larger ones (idug, idia) and smaller ones (ruguba,
412 ruguba) for cooking, a couple of wooden bowls (tagi), a rope cut out of an animal skin (scharu, scháruga) to tie up the slain meat, a cord twisted out of the bark fibers of the baobab (Adansonia digitata) for the drawing up and letting down of the beehives hung in trees (merihgo), along with a few dehaired skins (fulót) that serve as beds, as well as ax (haũo, hauereg) and knife (pandyug), constitute the
492 principal household equipment. In a few huts one also finds the en
412 dereta /pack-holders/ of the Masai, here called lalaho (leleweg),
413 as well as a hammer (giribét) for forging and a chisel for designing
177 the arrow points (mad, mara), and finally that sharpened small piece of sheet iron serving as razor-knife (herá, hereá). The entire family,
592 namely, husband, wife or wives, and the uncircumcised children, live in one /232/ hut. Men and boys, however, are usually out.
512 The day begins even before daybreak for the hunting men. They
[224] set out with a snack consisting of a little piece of boiled or roasted
[264] meat, so that the first light of day already finds them in the hunting
[825] grounds. The game now behaves best; as they say, it then feeds more eagerly and carelessly than a few hours later, when the sun already becomes annoying to it. At daybreak women and children leave the huts; firewood and water are carried up in order to cook
[251] the meat fetched from a larder located in a nearby tree. The meat is kept there and not in the camp, so that it hangs in the air and
512 thus remains fresh longer. After that the morning meal is eaten.
264 Actually the Wandorobo do not have definite mealtimes: as long as there is something edible they simply eat as long as they can.

/232 cont./

262 If lean times then come, one tries, as well as one can, to appease
the stomach with wild roots or tubers, with berries or other small
[252] fruits, with honey and honey beer. Meat is seldom eaten raw,
usually boiled or roasted at the open fire. For storage it is cut into
• 251 long strips that are hung to dry in the sun. When the meat is well
439 dried, it is stowed away in the aforementioned tree, close to the
231 camp; cattle and small livestock, which are bought from the Masai
for ivory, are not kept, but slaughtered immediately. Insofar as the
262 Wandorobo, in barter with sedentary tribes, are able to come into
[439] the possession of vegetables, they also live on these, but actually
only during times when, for some reason, only little game is to be
had. Otherwise the vegetable food acquired by trade constitutes
only a side dish, especially for woman and children. Many of them
[272] detest milk and base this on the fact that their stomachs, accustomed
only to meat diet from early childhood, do not tolerate it. Some
go so far as to throw away the udder of a slaughtered cow, although
[171] they eat that of a slain piece of game. There indeed seems to be no
doubt but that the previously mentioned Masai belief, according to
which milk and meat must not be brought together, rests on these
273 customs. Besides water, honey beer, which they make in the same
[201] way as the Masai, also serves them as a beverage. The latter prize
[171] that made by them more than their own, which probably rests on the
fact that the Wandorobo keep the good honey for themselves and sell
264 only the inferior kind. Men, women, and children eat together.
[252] Both the foods for the man, his wives, and children and, on the other
[415] hand, those for the youth and his favorite girl are cooked in one pot.
From this the food is poured into small wooden bowls (kitokog), of
273 which each adult sharing in the meal has his own. From the food
171 laws of the Masai, the custom that young unmarried men may not
drink honey beer is still found here as a survival. Tobacco is a
276 luxury of the married. Men smoke it, coarsely cut, in pipes carved
by themselves. Ground to powder and mixed with a little steppe
salt and /233/ fat, it serves both men and women for snuffing.
Women also like to chew the snuff.

/235 cont./

231 Then a man climbs up to the beehive, fastens it to a rope, unhooks it, and very slowly lowers it to the ground, so that through the continuing effect of the smoke the bees will also be driven out of the combs or stupefied in them. It is obvious that through this the honey must become very dirty, and, in fact, it tastes strongly of smoke and contains a large number of dead bees and larvae. No other method of driving the bees out is possible, however, and since they are extremely vicious and the people, only scantily clad, expose such large areas for their stings, the honey gatherers have to be enveloped in a thick cloud of smoke for their own protection. I was able to observe the viciousness of the native bees several times. It is by no means rare that a swarm will attack a caravan and sting some of the porters and donkeys into unconsciousness, the latter even to death. Tobacco smoke in particular incites them to attack, but they also seem to dislike loud singing and shouting.

In extracting the honey, one leaves about a quarter of it in each [251] comb so that the bees will not abandon the hive. The extracted honey [415] is packed into leather bags or wooden pots and thus stored. The capture of wild bees is unknown. Where such are found in a hollow [136] tree, one hangs in the vicinity an empty beehive that has previously been smeared on the inside with the extraordinarily aromatic honey of a Melipona species (subspecies Trigona) (2)

2. Identified by Herr Dr. Enderlein from samples sent to the Museum für Naturkunde /Museum of Natural Science/, Berlin.

222 known as el maîn. In order to be able to extract the honey of wild bees from hollow trees, one drives them out by holding aloft a burning branch with which one climbs to the hole.

411 In the camp one sees the men wither squatting about dully or
322 busy with carving, such as the beehives just mentioned, or with
[461] making bows, arrows, and clubs. The stick intended for the making
[462] of a bow (Fig. 83) (from the ol borogoi tree) is rounded, cut tapering at both ends, and then scraped smooth. After it has been rubbed